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ABSTRACT

This report presents the findings of a study done by a college-wide task force at the College of DuPage (Illinois) on academic calendar formats in an effort to determine whether to retain the quarter system or convert to another calendar. A brief introduction gives the background to the issue at DuPage. A section on procedures explains that the Task Force formed three committees to conduct the study: (1) an Other Institutions Committee contacted several other four- and two-year institutions and statewide systems to gather data via telephone interviews; (2) a Literature Search Committee conducted a search of data bank information systems; and (3) a Constituency Needs Committee conducted focus groups; open hearings; and a survey of administrators, classified staff, full- and part-time faculty, and day and evening students. A third section presents the findings of each of the committees that generally supported a recommendation to retain the quarter system as information from literature and other institutions indicated mixed follow-up results in retention, grading patterns, and changes in admission patterns following calendar changes. A concluding section offers suggestions for modifications to the existing quarter system. Extensive appendixes contain data, the survey instrument, and exhibits from the three committees. (JB)

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ACADEMIC CALENDAR TASK FORCE REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT

July, 1992
College of DuPage

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ABSTRACT

A college-wide Task Force was formed by Dr. McAninch to determine the advantages of various types of academic calendars, to review literature and contact other institutions that have been involved in calendar changes, to survey constituency groups as to their preference for calendars, and to recommend to the President whether College of DuPage should retain the quarter system or convert to another calendar.

The Task Force formed three committees to conduct the study. The Other Institutions Committee contacted several other four- and two-year institutions and statewide systems to gather data via phone interviews. The Literature Search Committee conducted a search of data bank information systems. The Constituency Needs Committee conducted focus groups, open hearings and a survey of administrators, classified staff, full- and part-time faculty and day and evening students.

Upon completion of the study, the Task Force recommended that College of DuPage retain a quarter system. Several conclusions and implications from the data supported the recommendation. The reasons for institutions changing their calendars were based on concerns for expected financial savings and for administrative reasons rather than concerns for improved student achievement and learning. Little information was available to indicate that calendar changes resulted in expected benefits to the institutions as few follow-up studies were conducted. Those follow-up studies that were conducted were limited to a period of one to two years after the change and the results of the studies were mixed in terms of retention, grading patterns and changes in admission patterns. There were no findings to indicate any increase or decrease in student learning and achievement related to the academic calendar. The literature reviewed indicated that calendar changes should only be considered if there is a compelling reason for the institution to change and each institution should choose the calendar that best fits its particular needs. The survey results indicated that all constituent groups except classified employees indicated a preference for some form of quarter calendar.

Based on the data gathered, the Task Force further recommended that the administration explore course scheduling methods that would provide more flexibility and accommodate the various needs of the students including courses that meet only two or three times during the day, one weekend day, or one evening per week. It was recommended that the current calendar be changed to include a break between spring and summer quarters and the timing of grade reports be addressed to enable students to transfer to four year colleges more effectively. Finally, a recommendation was made to better advise students regarding the transfer of courses to other institutions.

TL:GRM/abstract

I. INTRODUCTION

Since its beginning twenty-five years ago, College of DuPage has scheduled classes on a traditional quarter system. The academic year, consisting of three terms (quarters), begins in mid-September and ends in mid-June. College of DuPage has, in addition, operated a full summer quarter each year.

Many institutions of higher education have made calendar changes in the score of years beginning in the 1970's. As an example, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers reports that of 3,756 institutions surveyed during the 1991-1992 academic year, 99 institutions converted from one calendar system to another. As will be evident in this report the reasons for changing calendars are manifold.

The administration, faculty, and staff of College of DuPage have been cognizant of calendar conversions at other schools and have periodically reviewed the College's calendar to both assess the impact of changes elsewhere on its curriculum and assess the feasibility of altering its own calendar. In 1981 a college-wide task force reviewed the College calendar and recommended that the quarter system be retained. Again, in 1985 a committee of the Faculty Senate reviewed the calendar and recommended that a study of the calendar not be conducted.

As a learning community, College of DuPage is committed to delivering quality education in a mode which optimizes student success. The number of calendar changes during the past five years indicated that College of DuPage needed to investigate, again, the efficacy of its calendar. To that end the President established an Academic Calendar Task Force in October, 1991 with the following charge:

1. Study the advantages and disadvantages of various types of academic calendars.
2. Acquire information about academic calendar systems by reviewing the literature and contacting institutions that have converted from one calendar to another.
3. Survey faculty, administrators, classified staff, and students to determine their opinions about the academic calendar.
4. Recommend to the President whether College of DuPage should retain the quarter system or convert to another calendar.

II. PROCEDURES

The Office of Instruction at College of DuPage initiated a plan for the development of the Academic Calendar Task Force in September, 1991. Upon completion of a statement of the charge of the Task Force, a memorandum was sent to members of various constituencies at the College requesting volunteers to serve on the Task Force. The memorandum indicated the desire for representation of the following

constituent groups: administration, classified staff, faculty (full-time), faculty (part-time), and students. From the list of volunteers, the Office of Instruction identified two co-chairs and twenty-five members representing the constituent groups mentioned above. In addition to the balance of representation of interest groups, the Task Force membership represented a balance of opinions concerning the efficacy of different calendar options.

At the initial meeting of the Academic Calendar Task Force in October, 1991, the President of the College delivered the charge to the Task Force (See Introduction). The President requested that the report and recommendations of the Task Force be completed by April, 1992. With the concurrence of the President, the date was later changed to June, 1992.

After discussions of procedure, the Academic Calendar Task Force was organized into three committees designed to gather information to be used in the development of recommendations to the President. The three committees reflected the types of data to be gathered and studied:

(1) Literature Search Committee - charged with reviewing literature related to the advantages and disadvantages of the various calendar systems in existence;

(2) Other Institutions Committee - charged with identifying institutions of higher education that have recently changed calendars and obtaining information from those institutions about their reasons for change;

(3) Constituency Needs Committee - charged with developing specific data-gathering procedures to assess the perceptions and opinions of current constituent groups at College of DuPage.

Co-chairs were identified for each committee, and the committees were asked to analyze and synthesize their findings in a written report which presented facts rather than opinions of members. Each committee developed its own set of procedures for gathering data pursuant to its charge. The paragraphs below present a brief description of the procedures developed by each committee.

<u>OTHER INSTITUTIONS</u>: A list of schools that have converted from the quarter system to a different calendar system was developed by committee members. The list was compiled from information obtained from the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, personal knowledge of committee members, and word of mouth. Institutions identified were University of Illinois at Chicago, Trident Technical College (South Carolina), Central Missouri State University, Western Illinois University, and two state-wide systems: the Oregon State System (all two-year and four-year institutions) and the Virginia Community College System. The committee developed a list of twenty-four questions which included items on reasons for change,

problems of implementation, perceived advantages and disadvantages, etc. (See Appendix A for the complete report of the committee). Telephone interviews were used to obtain the information.

LITERATURE SEARCH COMMITTEE: The committee, with the assistance of a reference librarian, conducted a search of two data-bank information systems: Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse (ERIC), an information system which abstracts and catalogs journal articles and special documents related to education; and PsycLit, an information system which abstracts and catalogs articles related to psychology and theories of learning. In addition, a member of College of DuPage shared the data obtained as part of research for a doctoral degree. The searches identified seventeen articles for review and analysis. Eight major components of academic calendars were examined: educational outcomes, lifestyle concerns, marketing, economics, facilities utilization, curriculum, enrollment and retention, and transfer. The seventeen documents were distributed to all committee members who read and identified salient features. A list of the seventeen articles can be found in Appendix B.

CONSTITUENCY NEEDS COMMITTEE: Three methods of gathering data from the current constituent groups at College of DuPage were developed. First, focus groups were identified for each constituency by a random process. Eight to ten members were invited to participate in a two-hour session devoted to the discussion of the pros and cons of different calendar systems. The same leader, experienced in the application of the focus group technique, acted as moderator for each focus group. The focus group leader was not a member of the Academic Calendar Task Force. All the sessions were transcribed. Secondly, surveys for all constituent groups were developed by the committee. These surveys were brief and were designed to obtain information on preferences for different calendars. Surveys were sent to all administrators, full-time classified personnel, and full-time faculty. Random samples of part-time classified, part-time faculty, and students, both day and evening, were obtained through the use of various sampling techniques. The survey was well publicized through memoranda, newspaper articles, and radio announcements. Publicity emphasized that the surveys were not referenda on the issues but were one important tool for the Academic Task Force to consider in its deliberations. Finally, open hearings were held to ensure that all interested parties had adequate opportunity to voice their preferences. The open hearings were scheduled at two different times to accommodate day and evening staff, and

students. Task Force members were present at each hearing, but the purpose of the hearings was to solicit preferences and opinions, not respond to specific concerns related to different calendars.

III. FINDINGS

OTHER INSTITUTIONS COMMITTEE: The committee prepared a report based on telephone interviews and written documentation. The results are summarized below by noting first the general conclusions of the committee followed by a selection of specific comments.

The committee found little supporting data for the decision to make the change to semesters. There was little evidence of follow-up studies conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the change. Those studies found were conducted within two years of the effected change. Reasons for change of calendar were primarily economic as well as an implicit desire not to be out-of-step with other schools. No substantive data was found to validate whether the stated economic boon was real. Most follow-up studies did not contain information on the impact on students beyond impact on grades and withdrawal rates. As for impact on faculty and staff, the studies reported that negative expectations were seldom realized at those institutions where individuals were fully advised of what their involvement would be and how the transition would proceed. One of the most interesting things to arise from the study was the observation that all schools, whether on a semester or quarter calendar, were exploring variable entry/variable exit systems that defied classification.

The following specific observations were noted in the committee report:

1. The reasons for changing the calendar were economic, perceived ease of transfer, perceived ease of articulation, perceived impact of longer terms on student learning, and fewer registrations and grading cycles per year.
2. Several changes in enrollment patterns were observed at one or more of the schools involved in the study:
   (a) reduction in credit hours generated, average credit hour loads, and the proportion of full-time to part-time students in the lower division undergraduate division;
   (b) no change in the enrollment pattern of the 18-21 year age group;
   (c) reduction in enrollment of occupational degree students at 15 of 23 institutions;
   (d) increase in enrollment of full-time university parallel students;
   (e) increase in retention of full-time degree-seeking students from fall term to spring term.

3. Changes in the grades received by students included a decrease in the proportion of letter grades A, B, and C with a concurrent increase in the proportion of D, F, and W grades.
4. Some institutions experienced negative impacts on student progress during the first year of transition followed by an improvement during the second year.
5. The responses to the interview item on realized benefits to the college included improvement in the admission and registration process and a reduction in the cost of textbooks to students. Some institutions believed that the transition would result in more time for student extra-curricular activities. However, officials from commuter schools did not believe that calendar changes affected such activities.
6. There were mixed responses to the item on faculty workload. One institution found the need to hire more faculty; one institution reduced the number of classroom contact hours per year; and two institutions observed that there was no change in the number of students per year for which the faculty member had responsibility.
7. The effect on facilities utilization appeared to be minimal. One institution reported that more classroom space was available after the transition to semesters. None of the institutions responded to the question concerning the impact of the transition on off-campus facilities.
8. Variable-length sessions were the rule rather than the exception at the institutions that participated in this study.
9. The following comments addressed the transition from the quarter to semester calendar:
    (a) The time required for transition from initial study to implementation ranged from two to four years.
    (b) The activities necessary for the implementation of the new calendar included: preparation of manuals, providing for the completion of sequential courses begun under the quarter system, assigning new course numbers, and reprogramming computers.
    (c) Two institutions identified the cost of computer reprogramming as the most significant cost.

LITERATURE REVIEW COMMITTEE: Seventeen articles were identified for further study: three follow-up studies conducted by institutions that converted from quarters to semesters, four feasibility studies, five non-empirical, value-based studies which developed advantages and disadvantages of different calendars from a set of assumptions, three survey reports designed to determine the most widely used calendars, and two empirical studies focusing on the relationship of calendar to academic success. The summary below focuses on general observations from the literature followed by a selection of specific observations. The complete committee report may be found in the appendix.

The follow-up studies were conducted within two years of the transition which limits the scope of generalization that can be made about enrollment, retention, and patterns of grades. The non-empirical studies and the feasibility studies presented contradictory conclusions and did not support hypotheses with factual data. The above comments and the small number of studies reviewed suggest caution in the interpretation of the literature search.

The reasons given for a change in calendar were not related to the impact on student learning but rather to the desire for uniformity and the desire to achieve a reduction in administrative costs. Neither empirical study reviewed demonstrated a significant difference in student academic performance related to a difference in calendars. Several reports indicated that no single calendar is appropriate for all institutions and that the type of calendar should be determined by local needs.

The articles were examined to determine the effect of the calendar on eight components: educational outcomes, lifestyle concerns, marketing, economics, facilities utilization, curriculum, enrollment and retention, and transfer. The committee concluded that the results of such an analysis were inconsistent. No clear-cut advantages or disadvantages surfaced for any calendar.

The following specific findings were reported by the committee:

1. The four reasons given for a calendar change were:
   (a) To place an entire system under a common calendar.
   (b) The governing board or senior administrator favored one system over another.
   (c) The institution perceived a possible reduction in administrative costs.
   (d) The institution perceived the change as solving problems in other areas i.e. a stale curriculum.
2. The components that need to be considered in the decision to implement a calendar change should be prioritized as follows: education, enrollment, administrative concerns.
3. One study recommended ten general principles for transition from one calendar system to another:
   (a) Ensure that students are not harmed.
   (b) Provide a student appeals process.
   (c) Provide adequate time for the transition.
   (d) Develop a specific calendar with deadlines.
   (e) Do not seek to solve all problems with a calendar change.
   (f) Keep other changes to a minimum during transition.
   (g) Use existing structure for curriculum change.
   (h) Ensure that faculty loads are not increased.
   (i) Provide a communication system to keep all informed.
   (j) Use transition for academic improvement, not financial gain.

4. Before considering a change of calendar address the following questions: Is there a compelling reason to change? and, Which calendar is appropriate for this college?

In summary, the literature indicated that there were no clear-cut advantages of one calendar system over another. Change should be considered only if there is a compelling reason.

CONSTITUENCY NEEDS COMMITTEE: As noted in the procedures section, three data gathering techniques were employed. Focus group discussions were completed in January, 1992, surveys were completed in March and April, 1992, and two open hearings were conducted during April, 1992. The results and observations from each method are discussed below, and the committee's complete report of the analysis of the survey results is included in Appendix C.

The focus group discussions were facilitated by an individual with experience in the technique. The facilitator was not a member of any of the college constituency groups. Participants were selected using a random process and were invited to attend a two-hour session. Each focus group consisted of four to ten members representing their specific constituent groups. Separate focus groups were conducted for administration, classified, faculty (full-time), faculty (part-time), student (day), and student (evening). The results of the discussions are summarized as advantages and disadvantages of quarter calendars and semester calendars. A synthesis and summary of the comments appear in Exhibit A and Exhibit B on pages eight and nine. It is to be noted that the advantages and disadvantages are perceived advantages and disadvantages by the participants. Some perceptions were contradictory to the perceptions of individuals found in the literature search. The focus groups were not designed to survey preferences but to solicit comments about the efficacy of one system compared to the other. The comments from the focus group facilitator indicate that both proponents of the quarter calendar and proponents of the semester calendar were represented. After reviewing the results of focus group discussions the committee decided to design a brief survey in which the principle item addressed the respondent's preference for exactly one of six options. Three of the options were for quarter calendars, two were for semester calendars, and one was an open-ended option in which the respondent identified an "other" calendar. Survey questionnaires were designed for each constituency group so that demographic data applicable for the group could be obtained. The student survey form is included as Appendix D of this report.

EXHIBIT A

PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES OF QUARTER AND SEMESTER CALENDARS
(PERCEPTIONS FROM FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS)

QUARTER

- fewer courses during each term for full-time student.
- greater depth of concentration within each course.
- opportunity to explore a variety of courses.
- opportunity for contact with greater number of instructors during the calendar year.
- multiple entry points for reverse transfer student.
- short terms advantageous to adult learners.
- short terms advantageous for non-traditional student.
- attraction of more diverse cross-section of students.
- more efficient use of facilities.
- tuition payments spread over three terms each year.

SEMESTER

- more efficient learning experience for slow learners, slow starters.
- more institutions have a semester calendar than a quarter calendar.
- greater amount of preparation time, "absorption" time.
- less effect on time for instruction necessitated by cancellation of classes due to holiday.
- greater retention of students (lower withdrawal rate).
- fewer problems with transfer of credits to four-year institutions.
- greater depth of concentration within a course. (Note: this was also listed as an advantage of the quarter calendar.)
- greater flexibility in scheduling of evening courses.
- more contact between instructor and student because of faculty teaching more sections.

EXHIBIT B

PERCEIVED DISADVANTAGES OF QUARTER AND SEMESTER CALENDARS
(PERCEPTIONS FROM FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS)

QUARTERS

- concentration of course content in few weeks.
- cost of materials and labor for more registrations during the calendar year.
- impact of loss of time for instruction due to holidays.
- perceived problems of transferring credit hours to four year institutions.
- fewer opportunities for advising and counseling students.
- inability to take a greater number of courses per term.
- additional clerical work required because of number of terms per calendar year.
- late start of academic year in September and late finish of academic year in June.

SEMESTER

- registration in four to six individual courses for a student of full-time status.
- faculty required to teach more courses during the academic year.
- faculty responsible for instruction, testing, grading, and advising of more students during each term.
- perception that tuition is higher under the semester calendar.
- payment of tuition is concentrated over two periods as opposed to three during academic year.
- initial outlay of tuition is greater.
- more adjunct faculty will be required to teach the increase in sections per term.

The results of the survey are reported on pages 11 and 12. All administrators, full-time classified, and full-time faculty were surveyed, and the response rates were, respectively, 82%, 45%, and 70%. The remaining constituencies were sampled as follows: 500 part-time faculty with a response rate of 36%; 150 part-time classified with a response rate of 38%; 1330 day students with a response rate of 69% ; 778 evening students with a response rate of 58%. Student samples were obtained randomly through stratified and cluster sampling techniques.

The data reveal that no option received fifty percent or more of the preferences in any of the constituency groups. However, if the quarter options are collapsed or combined to a single "quarter" category, and if the semester options were also combined, a clear preference for the quarter calendar emerges. The collapsing of cells in any survey of preferences is, however, subject to interpretation, and although the Task Force believes the collapsing of cells to be appropriate in this situation, it does advise caution in the interpretation of results. A brief summary of the results for each constituent group is given below.

(a) Full-Time Faculty: The current college quarter calendar was selected by the largest percent (34%) of the respondents, and 65% expressed preference for some form of quarter calendar. Also, it is to be noted that 62% expressed a preference for a calendar other than the current calendar.

(b) Part-Time Faculty: Again, the current quarter calendar was selected by the largest percent (34%) of the respondents, and 69% expressed preference for some form of quarter calendar. Sixty-four percent indicated a preference for change.

(c) Administrators: The early semester option was selected by 43% of the administrators. When categories were combined, 58% selected a form of the quarter calendar. Seventy-five percent selected an option other than the current calendar.

(d) Full-Time Classified: The largest percent (44%) selected the early semester option, and when categories were combined, 53% of the full-time classified group selected some form of a semester calendar. Seventy-six percent expressed preference for a calendar other than the current college calendar.

(e) Part-Time Classified: Forty-four percent selected the early semester option, 51% selected some form of semester calendar. Seventy percent selected an option other than the current calendar.

(f) Day Students: The option chosen by the largest number of day students (29%) was the early semester option. However, the percent opting for the existing quarter calendar was 28%, and when categories were combined, 65% expressed a preference for a quarter calendar. Seventy-two percent

F/T Faculty Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	71	34.0
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	47	22.5
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	17	8.1
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	61	29.2
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	5	2.4
Other Calendars - Option 6	6	2.9
Unknown	2	1.0
TOTAL	209	100.0

P/T Faculty Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	62	34.4
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	37	20.6
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	26	14.5
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	47	26.1
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	6	3.3
Other Calendars - Option 6	1	.6
Unknown	1	.6
TOTAL	180	100.0

Administrative Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	10	25.0
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	9	22.5
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	4	10.0
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	17	42.5
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	0	0.0
Other Calendars - Option 6	0	0.0
TOTAL	40	100.0

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F/T Classified Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	46	24.0
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	27	14.1
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	11	5.7
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	84	43.8
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	18	9.4
Other Calendars - Option 6	5	2.6
Unknown	1	.5
TOTAL	192	100.0

P/T Classified Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	16	28.1
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	6	10.5
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	5	8.8
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	25	43.9
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	4	7.0
Unknown	1	1.8
TOTAL	57	100.0

Day Student Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	247	26.7
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	252	27.3
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	98	10.6
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	270	29.2
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	24	2.6
Other Calendars - Option 6	20	2.2
Unknown	13	1.4
TOTAL	924	100.0

Night Student Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	140	31.0
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	117	25.9
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	64	14.2
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	105	23.3
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	19	4.2
Other Calendars - Option 6	3	.7
Unknown	3	.7
TOTAL	451	100.0

expressed a preference for a calendar other than the existing quarter calendar.

(g) Evening Students: The calendar chosen by the largest number of evening students (31%) was the existing College of DuPage calendar, while 71% preferred some type of quarter calendar.

Within constituency groups there was agreement in calendar preference. Comparing responses of full-time and part-time faculty, the responses by category as well as in the collapsed "quarter" and "semester" categories were nearly identical. The same observation can be made of full-time and part-time classified staff. A second comparison worth highlighting is the contrast between day and evening students. When quarter options and semester options were combined, both day and evening students preferred a quarter calendar. However, day students preferred the early semester option to all other options, while evening students preferred the current existing quarter option to all others.

The data gathered through the constituent surveys indicate:

(a) When quarter options and semester options are combined, there is greater support for some type of quarter calendar on the part of full-time faculty, part-time faculty, administrators, day students and evening students. Both full-time classified and part-time classified expressed greater support for some type of semester option.

(b) The majority of all constituency groups expressed support for calendar options which are different from the current college calendar.

Independent verification of the survey results was provided by an administrator at College of DuPage. Betsy Cabatit-Segal conducted her own survey of calendar preference as part of her doctoral studies. Ms. Cabatit-Segal shared her results with the Constituency Needs Committee only after the committee's survey analysis was complete. The Cabatit-Segal survey included the following item: "In your professional opinion should the College of DuPage remain on the quarter calendar or shift to the semester calendar?" The responses of various constituency groups are shown here with the number in parenthesis indicating the percent of the group favoring the retention of the quarter calendar: full-time faculty (58.3%), part-time faculty (72.3%), librarians/counselors (65.2%), administrators (63.4%), students (71.2%), and classified staff (55.4%).

Open hearings were held on April 29 and April 30, 1992 to ensure that the thoughts and opinions of all who wished to address the issue were heard. One hearing was conducted during the mid-day hours, and a second during early evening hours. Attendance was light with no more than thirty participants at either of the hearings. The preferences

expressed were mixed. However, the preferences of those who spoke were similar to the results found in the survey.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The Academic Calendar Task Force received, accepted, and discussed each of the three committee reports. The committees were asked to state their findings without expressing opinions related to the efficacy of one calendar system to another. As each written report was completed, it was discussed at a scheduled Task Force meeting. Each committee report appears, in its entirety, as an appendix to this report.

The Task Force addressed the implications of the findings during May, 1992 and unanimously agreed to the following recommendation:

THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT COLLEGE OF DUPAGE RETAIN A QUARTER CALENDAR SYSTEM.

The recommendation reflects the consideration and balancing of data from current literature, experiences of institutions that have changed calendars, and preferences of the various constituencies of College of DuPage. A number of conclusions and implications from the data support the recommendation:

(a) The research from the Literature Search Committee indicated that the primary reasons for change of calendar were not related to the prospect of improved student achievement.

(b) The research from the Other Institutions Committee indicated that administrative and economic concerns were the primary factors in decisions to change calendars.

(c) The literature reviewed did not demonstrate any increase or decrease in student learning and achievement related to the calendar of the institution in which the student was enrolled.

(d) The literature reviewed identified the need for each institution to choose the calendar that best fits its needs.

(e) Sources in the literature indicated that calendar changes should only be considered if there is a compelling reason for the institution to change.

(f) Follow-up studies by institutions that converted to a different calendar were rare and, in all cases, limited to a period of one to two years after the study.

(g) The results of those follow-up studies that were done were mixed in terms of retention, grading patterns, and changes in admission patterns.

(h) All constituent groups except classified employees indicate a preference for some form of quarter calendar.

While the recommendation of the Academic Calendar Task Force is that the College remain on a quarter calendar, considerable evidence from the research indicates that further consideration should be given to the possibility of changing the current calendar to a quarter calendar that is more flexible and accommodating. The Academic Calendar Task Force suggests the college explore course scheduling which utilizes a variety of formats to better meet the needs of students. Possible formats include day sections that meet only two or three times per week or one weekend day per week. It is also suggested that the college consider calendar options within the quarter calendar that address the concerns of the timing of grade reports and the need for a break between the spring and summer quarters. Finally, the Academic Calendar Task Force recommends that increased efforts be undertaken to advise students regarding the transfer of courses from College of DuPage to other academic institutions.

Other Institutions Committee

Report of Findings

Purpose

As per the Charge given the Task Force by H.D. McAninch, this committee took upon itself to contact other institutions which had made the switch from quarters to another academic calendar system or were currently undergoing the change. To accomplish this, we relied primarily on telephone interviews, using a questionnaire which provided some uniformity in arranging the results of those phone interviews. The institutions contacted were chosen on the basis of a study done by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers (AACRAO), word of mouth, and personal knowledge by committee members of institutions that would qualify. Those chosen were primarily community colleges which would have more in common with College of DuPage than four year schools, except for University of Illinois at Chicago which has a large commuting population. The schools studied then were: University of Illinois at Chicago, Trident Technical College (Charleston, SC), Central Missouri State University, Western Illinois University, The Oregon State System (All 2 and 4 year schools), and the Virginia Community College System.

Activities

Our major activity was the telephone interviewing, although we did get written information from some institutions following our phone contact. The questionnaire and its findings are listed below:

1. What were the compelling reasons for change?

   Economic
   Ease of Transfer
   Ease of Articulation
   More "absorbtion" time between class meetings
   Allow more classroom instruction time
   Fewer registrations would allow college more time to focus on other problems

2. Was the change positive or negative?

   No negatives were verbalized.
   Some follow-up studies indicate changes in enrollment and grade patterns, and credit hours generated.
   Some verbal responses reflect adaptability of staff to that which exists.

3. What was the transition process?
4. What did it involve?
5. How long did it take?

Questionnaire (#5 cont.)

The preparation process took 2 to 4 years; implementation occurred in a given term. Some schools indicated substantial work continued during the first semester of implementation, particularly in the computer programming area--grades,transcripts, etc.

Among things involved were: Preparing manuals; allowing time for course series (such as English) to be completed; assigning new course numbers; allowing provisions to waive graduation credits of 1/2 hour or less; reprogramming computers; consideration of faculty appointments; cutting first summer short to allow for change.

6. How much lead time was there before the transition?

The Virginia Community College System had a two-month planning phase, after the decision was made.

Northern Virginia had approximately one year.

UIC had approximately two years.

7. How much lead time was provided for the transition?

Virginia implemented Phase I of their project in November 1986 and courses were converted between September 1 and April 1987.

Northern Viginia took approximately 3 years.

UIC took two years.

8. What were the perceived problems before the change and what were they after the change?

At Central Missouri State University, a study was required 2 years after implementation to modify the calendar.

In the Virginia system there was an initial assumption that enrollment would initially go down, that people on the staffs of the various colleges might get RIF'd and that students would have additional difficulties, particularly with financial aid. None of these expectations came true.

9. What were the measurable costs? Estimated? Actual?
10. What items were included in the transition costs?

Western Illinois felt the most measurable cost was time. No measurement of actual costs was made.
No specific information available for any of the schools contacted, but Northern Virginia felt a major cost was computer changes requiring a large amount of input; UIC concurred on computer programming being a significant cost factor, as well as preparation of new documents.

Questionnaire (#11 cont.)

11. Has enrollment changed significantly one way or the other since transition?

Some follow-up studies reported changes:
CMSU reported a reduction in credit hours generated, average credit hour loads, and the proportion of FT to PT students (dramatic in lower division undergrads). In the undergrad divisions there were decreases in proportion of A to C grades and an increase in proportion of D, F, and W grades. There was a negative impact on student progress in the first year of the switch, which improved in the second year. (Note: This study states that its findings agree with the findings of a 1984 study of 10 universities in Florida and Iowa undergoing similar calendar changes)

For the Virginia Community College System enrollment, annual FTEs continued to increase at about the same rate as the previous two years, but fall term FTEs decreased. There were more full-time students, but fewer full-time degree students enrolled than in the previous fall quarter. Although the 18-21 year-old enrollment remained stable, the occupational degree students decreased at 15 of 23 colleges, while the full-time university parallel students increased at 18 of the colleges. All but one of the colleges experienced an increase in the retention of full-time degree students from fall into spring terms and the retention rate for the system as a whole increased from 76.5 % to 83.0 %.

Northern Virginia increased 11%.

UIC too soon to tell.

12. Have they realized the potential benefits they foresaw or any that they didn't foresee?

At Virginia the cost of student textbooks appears to have gone down (costs to the students).

At Northern Virginia the staff felt less pressured; admission and registration flows smoother and better, and there is time to focus on other college concerns.

13. Was there anything that surprised them?

Trident was surprised at the ease of the process thus far for implementation in Summer 1992.

14. Were there any disadvantages post-transition that were not anticipated?

No response.

Questionnaire (cont.)

15. Have student services improved or not? Have staffing patterns changed?

    At both UIC and Northern Virginia student services improved; there is more time for extra-curricular activities and more student involvement there may be a possible staffing pattern change in the future.

16. How did you handle the fact that staff would be teaching more students per year?

    At Western Illinois staff actually teach less hours under the semester system (45/semester vs. 48/quarter).

    Both UIC and Northern Virginia did not find that faculty would be teaching more students per year. Northern Virginia did hire more faculty.

    No problems were identified in non-union schools.

17. Did you build any variable-length sessions into the calendar?

    Variable-length sessions were the rule rather than the exception in semester-calendar schools.

18. What key officers were involved in the process?

    At UIC it was the Associate Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs and his staff.

19. Were there any problems with facility availability or use after the change?

    Minimal impact. At Western Illinois the change to semesters resulted in more classroom space.

20. What, if any, was the impact on part-time faculty?

    Northern Virginia reported that there were adjustments needed to be addressed regarding scheduling of part-time faculty.

    Others did not respond, but see #16.

21. What was the impact on off-campus facilities?

    No reponse.

22. Do students get more involved in extra-curricular activities?

    No significant change expected in commuter schools, but see #15.

23. Have follow-up studies been done on the change and its impact?

    A few follow-up studies have been done on the impact on enrollment and grades. See item #11.

    UIC analysed studies done by the University of Tennessee and Virginia Polytech.

24. What, if any, has been the impact on faculty advising?

    Only UIC responded, indicating no expected change.

Findings

In general we found that there was very little supporting data for the decision to make the change or follow-up after the change has been made to evaluate its effectiveness. With many of the schools the change has been made so long ago that it's impossible to find any information out because no one is left who knows and nothing was written down. It's possible that no one wanted to look at the process after all they had gone through to make the change.

The compelling reason for change seems to include an implicit desire not to be out-of-step with other schools, since there is no hard data to back up whether the stated economic boon has been real or not. Almost across the board, however, those schools that went from quarters to something longer all had shorter sessions within the longer sessions.

None of the schools contacted had information beyond impact on grades and withdrawal rates for impact on students. As for impact on faculty and staff, many reported that negative expectations were seldom realized if everyone had a part in and/or felt they were fully advised of what was involved and how the transition would proceed.

The most interesting thing that arose out of our study was that all schools, whether on semester or quarters, seem to be verging on a variable entry/variable exit system that is neither and both.

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APPENDIX B

ACADEMIC CALENDAR TASK FORCE

LITERATURE REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

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Purpose

The Academic Calendar task force was appointed by Dr. McAninch to research the advantages and disadvantages of the current quarter-based calendar system at College of DuPage, compare the quarter system to alternative calendar systems, and report to the President the findings of the task force. The task force was divided into three subcommittees: Literature Review, Other Institutions, and Constituency/Methodology.

Activities

The Literature Review subcommittee, with the assistance of Marian Zimmerman, conducted a literature search of both ERIC and PsycLit. In addition, Betsy Cabatit-Segal was contacted to share data she had obtained as a part of her doctoral research. All articles pertaining to academic calendars and educational outcomes were obtained. Seventeen articles were distributed and read by each committee member. Eight major components of academic calendars were examined: educational outcomes, lifestyle concerns, marketing, economics, facilities utilization, curriculum, enrollment and retention, and transfer.

Findings

Five academic calendars were identified in the literature.:

The Traditional Semester is divided into two academic units of 15 to 17 weeks. The first semester begins about the middle of September and is concluded about the middle or end of January. the second semester begins in early February and is concluded about the first week in June. Until 1971, this was the most common calendar.

The Early Semester is also divided into two units of 15-17 weeks but with the first beginning near the end of August and concluding about the 20th of December. The second semester begins the middle of January and concludes about the middle of May. This became the most widely used calendar in 1971.

The Quarter System divides the academic year into three units-fall, winter, and spring-of approximately 11 weeks. Under the traditional quarter system the fall quarter begins late in September and closes before Christmas. The winter and spring quarters start after the first of January with a short break between and conclude the first part of June.

The Trimester is an attempt to divide the calendar year into three equal units to encourage year-round education.

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> The 4-1-4 is a four month session, followed by a one month short session and another four month session. It has been described as four courses, one course, and four courses. It is quite similar to the early semester plan except for the addition of the short session. (Minkel & Norman, 1984, p. 28)

Of the seventeen articles reviewed three were follow-up reports conducted by universities that had made the transition from quarters to semesters (Puyear, 1989; Coleman et. al., 1983; Clark, 1986), four were feasibility studies (Minkel & Norman, 1983; Reeb, 1980; Larsson, 1978; & Taylor & Head,1988), five were non-empirical, value based articles that reasoned to the advantages and disadvantages of various calendars (Harlan & Mahan, 1988; Mabry, 1988; Pollock, 1984; Taylor, 1989, & Rounds, 1982), three were surveys conducted to determine which calendars are most widely used (Munson, 1990; Hand et.al., 1983; Kaplan, 1985), and two were empirical studies focusing on the relationship of academic success and the calendar (Haney & Land, 1986; & Brookes, 1985). Neither empirical study demonstrated a significant difference in student performance under the various calendars. Follow-up studies were limited to one to two years after the conversion. This resulted in difficulty in assessing whether or not changes in patterns such as enrollment, retention, and student grades were the result of a transitional adjustment period or the academic calendar per-se. The non-empirical, value based studies presented contradictory positions. Feasibility studies were just that and provided no follow up to support the hypotheses generated. These facts, coupled with the very low number of empirical studies found, necessitate caution when interpreting the findings of this literature review.

Studies revealed that institutions changed from one calendar to another for the following reasons:

1. To place an entire system under a common calendar.
2. The governing board or senior administrator favored one system over another.
3. The institution perceived a possible reduction in administrative cost.
4. The institution perceived the change as solving problems in other area i.e. a stale curriculum.

Examination of the articles as they relate to the eight major components (educational outcomes, lifestyle concerns, marketing, economics, facilities utilization, curriculum, enrollment and retention, and transfer) yielded inconsistent results. No clear cut advantages or disadvantages surfaced for any one calendar

over another.

Performance under each calendar varies by type of student i.e. transfer vs. occupational, full-time vs part-time. Curriculum revision was cited as a possible advantage of changing, however, it may have been the change and not the specific calendar that resulted in curriculum improvement. All articles stressed the importance of offering flexible schedules regardless of the chosen calendar. Many maintained quarter offerings within their new semester system.

Should an institution decide to change calendars Minkel and Norman (1984) recommend ten general principles for transition:

1. Ensure that students are not harmed by the transition process.
2. Establish procedures to address students appeals.
3. Allow adequate time to do the transition well.
4. Maintain a clear series of deadlines.
5. Do not seek to solve all of the university's problems through a calendar change.
6. Keep other changes to a minimum during the transition period.
7. Use existing structure for curricular and other changes.
8. Ensure that faculty teaching loads are not increased by a semester transition.
9. Provide an effective system of communication with students, faculty, staff, and the public.
10. Use the semester transition for academic improvement, not for financial gains. (pp.4-6)

According to Coleman et. al. (1983) two questions need to be addressed before an institution should consider a change in academic calendar.

1. Is there a compelling reason to change?
2. Which calendar is appropriate for this college?

They go on the say, "although no calendar is ideal for every purpose, a calendar's usefulness is usually measured by how well the system meets the institution's specific needs" (p.1). Coleman et. al. suggest that an institution needs to look at the following in order of importance when considering a change:

1. Education
2. Enrollment
3. Administrative Concerns & Workload

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Summary

No clear cut advantages were found in the literature to support one calendar over another. Change is only recommended when there is a compelling reason to change. Two major reasons were offered for change: curriculum revision and coordination with other institutions. These changes can be easily accommodated within either calendar and do not appear to be compelling reasons for change based on this literature review.

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ACADEMIC CALENDAR SURVEY REPORT

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Academic Calendar Task Force
May 1992

SECTION I

DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

CALENDAR TASK FORCE SURVEY

CALENDAR TASK FORCE SURVEY DATA--DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

During March and April 1992, seven constituency groups of the College were surveyed concerning the academic calendar at the College of DuPage. These groups included the full-time faculty, the part-time faculty, the administrators, the full-time classified staff, the part-time classified staff, the day students, and the night students. All were given essentially the same item with respect to their preferences for an academic calendar at College of DuPage. This item asked each respondent to indicate which of five Academic Calendar Options best met their academic, work, and personal needs. A sample copy of the survey is in the appendix of this report.

FULL-TIME FACULTY

All 300 full-time faculty were surveyed in this project. A total of 209 or 70 percent responded to the survey. Those who reported having taught more than one year at the College (N=175) averaged 13.9 years of teaching experience at C.O.D. Seventeen of the respondents reported having been at the College for less than one year. All Divisions at the College were represented in the sample. Table I indicates the distribution of respondents for each division.

TABLE I
F/T Faculty Respondents By Division

Division	Number	Percent
Business and Services	26	12.4
Communications	26	12.4
Humanities	18	8.6
Natural Sciences	42	20.1
Occupational and Vocational Ed	34	16.3
Social and Behavioral Sciences	24	11.5
Academic Alternatives	10	4.8
LRC	6	2.9
Counseling	11	5.3
Other Professional/Faculty	3	1.4
Evenly Split Between Two Divisions	1	.5
Unidentified	8	3.8
TOTAL	209	100.0

Table II indicates the responses of full-time faculty for all six possible calendar option choices that were provided in the survey.

TABLE II
F/T Faculty Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	71	34.0
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	47	22.5
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	17	8.1
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	61	29.2
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	5	2.4
Other Calendars - Option 6	6	2.9
Unknown	2	1.0
TOTAL	209	100.0

As indicated in Table II, 34 percent (N=71) of this group chose the present College calendar (Option 1) as best meeting their needs. This was the largest category chosen by this group. Twenty-nine percent (N=61) chose the early semester option (Option 4). Twenty-three percent (N=47) chose the quarter calendar Option 2, and eight percent (N=17) chose the quarter calendar Option 3. The remaining five percent chose the late semester (N=5) and their own suggested options (N=6). Two respondents did not answer this item.

Although Option 1 (the current College calendar) was selected by the largest number of respondents, there are at least two other descriptive dimensions most noteworthy in these data. One is that of the total sample, 65 percent (N=135) expressed first preference for some form of a quarter calendar. However, it should also be noted that sixty-two percent of the full-time faculty surveyed (N=136) expressed preference for a calendar other than that of the present College calendar (31 percent for other quarter options; 32 percent for semester options).

PART-TIME FACULTY

A random sample of five hundred part-time faculty was surveyed and 180 (36 percent) responded. Those with at least one year of teaching experience at the College (N=128) reported an average of six years of experience at the College. Twenty-nine respondents indicated that they had less than one full year of teaching at the College. All divisions/areas were represented in the sample.

Table III indicates the distribution of respondents by division/area.

TABLE III
P/T Faculty Respondents By Division

Division	Number	Percent
Business and Services	29	16.1
Communications	9	5.0
Humanities	17	9.4
Natural Sciences	14	7.8
Occupational and Vocational Ed	23	12.8
Social and Behavioral Sciences	8	4.4
Academic Alternatives	9	5.0
Off Campus	43	23.9
LRC	4	2.2
Counseling	1	.6
Other Professional/Faculty	7	3.9
Evenly Split Between Two Divisions	3	1.7
Unidentified	13	7.2
TOTAL	180	100.0

Table IV indicates the frequency distribution and percentages for each of the six possible calendar options for this group.

TABLE IV
P/T Faculty Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	62	34.4
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	37	20.6
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	26	14.5
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	47	26.1
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	6	3.3
Other Calendars - Option 6	1	.6
Unknown	1	.6
TOTAL	180	100.0

As with the full-time faculty, the largest group of respondents perceived the existing College calendar (Option 1) as best meeting their needs (34 percent; N=62). Twenty-six percent (N=47) selected the early semester calendar (Option 4). Twenty-one percent (N=37) selected quarter calendar (Option 2) and fourteen percent

(N=26) selected quarter (option 3). Of the remaining respondents, 3 percent (N=6) expressed preference for the late semester (Option 5), one respondent provided his/her own option and one did not respond to this item.

Although Option 1 (present College calendar) was selected by the largest percentage of respondents, it should be noted that of the total respondents, 69 percent (N=125) expressed first preference for some form of a quarter calendar. It should also be noted that 64 percent (N=116) of the sample expressed first preference for a calendar other than the present College calendar (35 percent for other quarter; 29 percent for other semester).

ADMINISTRATORS

All forty-nine administrators at the College were surveyed for this project and forty (82 percent) responded. This group reported an average of just over twelve years of experience at the College.

TABLE V
Administrative Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	10	25.0
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	9	22.5
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	4	10.0
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	17	42.5
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	0	0.0
Other Calendars - Option 6	0	0.0
TOTAL	40	100.0

As indicated in Table V, 43 percent (N=17) of this group chose the early semester Option 4 as the calendar best meeting their needs. Twenty-five percent of those responding (N=10) selected the present College calendar (Option 1) and 23 percent (N=9) chose quarter calendar (Option 2). Ten percent (N=4) chose quarter (Option 3). Although early semester calendar (Option 4) was the selection of the largest percentage of this group, it is interesting to note that of the total group of respondents, 58 percent (N=23) preferred some form of quarter option and 43 percent (N=17) preferred some form of semester option. Seventy-five percent (N=30) preferred an option other than that of the present College calendar (33 percent for other quarter and 43 percent for other semester.)

FULL-TIME CLASSIFIED

All 423 full-time classified staff were surveyed and forty-five percent (N=192) responded. This group reported an average of eight years of experience working at the College.

TABLE VI
F/T Classified Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	46	24.0
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	27	14.1
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	11	5.7
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	84	43.8
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	18	9.4
Other Calendars - Option 6	5	2.6
Unknown	1	.5
TOTAL	192	100.0

As indicated in Table VI, 44 percent (N=84) indicated that the early semester calendar (Option 4) would best meet their needs. Twenty-four percent (N=46) indicated that the present College calendar (Option 1) would best meet their needs. Fourteen percent (N=27) indicated a preference for quarter Option 2. Option 5 (late semester) was the preference of 9 percent (N=18), quarter Option 3 was the preference of 6 percent (N=11) and 3 percent (N=5) expressed preference for some form of other calendar of their own suggestion (Option 6). One person did not respond to this item.

While early semester Option 4 was selected by the largest percentage of these respondents, it should be noted that of all the respondents, 53 percent (N=102) expressed preference for some form of semester calendar and forty-four percent (N=84) expressed preference for some form of quarter calendar. Of this group, 76 percent (N=145) expressed preference for a form of calendar other than that of the present College calendar.

PART-TIME CLASSIFIED

A random sample of 150 part-time classified was surveyed and 57 (38 percent) returned completed survey forms. Members of this group had worked at the College an average of four years.

TABLE VII
P/T Classified Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	16	28.1
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	6	10.5
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	5	8.8
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	25	43.9
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	4	7.0
Unknown	1	1.8
TOTAL	57	100.0

As indicated in Table VII, forty-four percent (N=25) favored the early semester calendar (Option 4) and twenty-eight percent (N=16) favored the current College calendar. Another nineteen percent (N=11) favored the other two quarter options (six respondents for Option 2 and five for Option 3). The remaining respondents (N=5) included four (7 percent for semester option five) and one who did not respond to this item. While the early semester Option 4 was the first choice of the largest percentage of these respondents, it should be noted that 51 percent (N=29) selected the two semester options combined. Forty-seven percent of this group (N=27) selected some form of quarter option as a calendar best meeting their needs. Seventy percent of this group (N=40) selected a calendar other than the present calendar at the College (19 percent for other quarter options and 51 percent for semester options).

STUDENT CALENDAR SURVEY RESULTS

In the course of this research, 2,108 surveys were distributed to students in classes at the College. A total of 1,375 were returned for a response rate of 65 percent. Students were surveyed with a 63 percent proportion (1,330) being day students and 37 percent (778) being evening students.

DAY STUDENTS

With respect to the day student sample, 1,330 surveys were distributed with a return of 924 or 69 percent. Table VIII indicates the distribution of expressed intent of the students in their college studies.

TABLE VIII
Day Student Respondents By Intent

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
A.A. or A.S. Degree (Transfer Degree)	394	42.6
Transfer--No C.O.D. Degree	169	18.3
A.A.S. Degree (Occupational Degree)	130	14.1
Certificate (Occupational Certificate)	51	5.5
Upgrade Job Skills	42	4.5
Explore Career Options	20	2.2
Personal Enrichment	29	3.1
No Definite Purpose In Mind	19	2.1
Unknown	70	7.6
TOTAL	924	100.0

The largest proportion of the group (N=394 or 43 percent) indicated that they were pursuing a transfer degree. The next largest group (N=169 or 18 percent) indicated that they were transfer students without intention of completing a degree. A total of 130 (14 percent) are pursuing an A.A.S. (occupational degree) and another 51 (6 percent) are pursuing an occupational certificate. A combined total of 11 percent of the group indicated that they were upgrading job skills, exploring career options, taking courses for personal enrichment or had no definite purpose for their studies. Eight percent (N=70) did not respond to this item.

Of those reporting gender, 57 percent were female and 43 percent were male (5 percent did not report gender). The average age was 25.7, with 30 percent part-time and 61 percent full-time students (9 percent did not respond to this item).

Table IX provides the distribution of responses to the central item in the survey.

TABLE IX
Day Student Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	247	26.7
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	252	27.3
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	98	10.6
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	270	29.2
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	24	2.6
Other Calendars - Option 6	20	2.2
Unknown	13	1.4
TOTAL	924	100.0

The calendar chosen by the greatest number of day students was the early semester Option 4 (N=270, 29 percent). This was followed by the quarter calendar Option 2 (N=252, 27 percent) and the existing quarter calendar Option 1 (N=247, 27 percent). The next largest percentage was for the quarter calendar Option 3 (N=98, 11 percent), the late semester Option 5 (N=24, 3 percent) and other suggested options (Option 6) at 2 percent (N=20). Thirteen people (N=13, 1 percent) did not respond to this item.

Although Option 4 (early semester calendar) was selected by the largest number of respondents, a total of 597 day students (or 65 percent) selected some form of quarter option as best meeting their needs. A total of 294 or 32 percent selected some form of semester option as best meeting their needs. The remainder (N=33, or 4 percent) designed their own option or did not respond to this survey item. Given the range of choices in this survey 72 percent (N=664) chose a calendar other than that of the present College calendar.

EVENING STUDENTS

A total of 778 surveys were sent to evening classes at the College for administration, with 451 received for a return rate of 58 percent. Table X indicates a distribution of intents for taking courses at the College.

TABLE X
Night Student Respondents By Intent

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
A.A. or A.S. Degree (Transfer Degree)	173	38.4
Transfer--No C.O.D. Degree	76	16.9
A.A.S. Degree (Occupational Degree)	79	17.5
Certificate (Occupational Certificate)	43	9.5
Upgrade Job Skills	27	6.0
Explore Career Options	11	2.4
Personal Enrichment	10	2.2
No Definite Purpose In Mind	2	.4
Unknown	30	6.7
TOTAL	451	100.0

A total of 173 (38 percent) reported that they were pursuing a transfer degree (Associate in Arts or Associate in Science) and another 76 (17 percent) reported that they were taking courses with the purpose of transferring but without a degree. While somewhat lower than the day students (N=43 or 18 percent), the transfer intentions were the intentions chosen by the majority of both groups (61 percent of day and 55 percent of evening students surveyed). Eighteen percent (N=79) indicated they were pursuing an Associate in Applied Science (occupational degree) and 10 percent (N=43) indicated that they were pursuing an occupational certificate. The remaining

18 percent (N=80) indicated a variety of reasons including upgrading job skills (6 percent), exploring career options (2 percent), personal enrichment (2 percent) and no definite purpose or no response (7 percent).

Fifty-eight percent of those reporting gender were female and 42 percent were male (18 or 4 percent did not report gender). The average age reported by the evening students surveyed was 28. Sixty-seven percent indicated they were part-time students, and 27 percent indicated they were full-time students (6 percent did not respond to this item).

Table XI provides a distribution of the evening student sample's preference with respect to academic calendar.

TABLE XI
Night Student Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	140	31.0
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	117	25.9
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	64	14.2
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	105	23.3
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	19	4.2
Other Calendars - Option 6	3	.7
Unknown	3	.7
TOTAL	451	100.0

As indicated, the present College calendar Option 1 was chosen by the largest group of evening student respondents (140 or 31 percent) as best meeting their needs. This was followed by the quarter calendar Option 2 with 117 or 26 percent. A total of 105 (23 percent) chose the early semester calendar Option 4. Fourteen percent (N=64) chose quarter calendar Option 3 and the remainder were divided between the late semester Option 5 (N=19 or 4 percent), other options (N=3 or 1 percent), and no option indicated (N=3 or 1 percent).

Given the options presented, a total of 71 percent (N=321) of this group chose some form of quarter option as best meeting their needs. Twenty-seven percent (N=124) chose some form of semester option. A total of 68 percent (N=308) chose an option other than that of the present College calendar.

SOME CROSSTABULATIONS--STUDENT SURVEYS

Some crosstabulations of responses for students by nature of their intent for studying at College of DuPage were provided in this study. These data are descriptive crosstabulations and do not contain any inferential statistics.

Day students with intent to obtain a transfer degree chose the quarter calendar Option 2 as best meeting their needs in greatest numbers (32 percent). However, those with transfer intent but not pursuing degrees choose the early semester Option 4 as best

meeting their needs in greatest number (53 percent). In comparison, occupational degree students chose quarter calendar Option 2 (33 percent) and certificate students chose existing college calendar Option 1 (33 percent). However, when combining quarter calendar options considering the choices presented, 64 percent of the students with transfer degree intentions chose some type of quarter system. The same was true of 43 percent of the non-degree transfer students. For occupational degree students, 79 percent selected some type of quarter option as best meeting their needs as did 65 percent of the certificate students.

Evening students with intent to transfer were divided in their first choice calendar preference, with the largest group of transfer degree students choosing the present College calendar Option 1 (34 percent) and the largest group of non-degree transfer students (46 percent) choosing the early semester Option 4. In combining options, 73 percent of the transfer degree students selected some form of quarter calendar as best meeting their needs compared to 49 percent of the non-degree transfer students. With respect to occupational degree students, 32 percent selected the present College calendar Option 1 as first choice as did 39 percent of the certificate students. Eighty-five percent of the occupational degree students and 83 percent of the certificate students selected some form of quarter calendar as first choice for best meeting their academic needs.

THE TOTAL STUDENT SAMPLE

With respect to the central survey item, Table XII indicates the results when the 924 day students and the 451 evening students are combined into one student group (N=1,375).

TABLE XII
Total Student Respondents By Calendar Option

Calendar Option	Number	Percent
Existing C.O.D. Calendar - Option 1	387	28.1
Quarter Calendar - Option 2	369	26.8
Quarter Calendar - Option 3	162	11.8
Early Semester Calendar - Option 4	375	27.3
Late Semester Calendar - Option 5	43	3.1
Other Calendars - Option 6	23	1.7
Unknown	16	1.2
TOTAL	1375	100.0

The item chosen by the largest proportion of students in the combined group was the existing College calendar Option 1 (N=387 or 28 percent), followed closely by the early semester Option 4 (N=375 or 27 percent), with the quarter calendar Option 2 a very close third (N=369 or 27 percent). Given the range of options presented, 67 percent (N=918) chose some version of a quarter calendar as best meeting their needs and 30 percent (N=418) chose a version of a semester calendar. Seventy-one percent of the sample (N=972) chose a version of calendar other than that of the present College calendar (39 percent for other quarter, 30 percent for other semester and 2 percent for a calendar of their own design).

OTHER OPTIONS

Option 6 of the survey allowed respondents to create their own option for a proposed calendar. Six full-time faculty indicated their own options, with three being variations of semester options and three being variations of quarter options. Five full-time classified also supplied their own options, including one semester option and four quarter options. One part-time faculty member proposed a combination of semester and quarter "tracks" for transfer and occupational courses. Option 6 was also selected by twenty day students and three night students. Eleven of the day students designed some type of quarter system, seven designed a semester system, and two had no preference. There were two patterns that were evident in the self designed options by the day students, 1) the majority wanted a break between spring and summer term, and 2) the majority presented a calendar starting in early August and ending in early May. Two of the three night students indicated some type of quarter system and the other one indicated some type of semester system. No members of the other groups provided individually designed options.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY DATA

The data from this survey indicated that the current College calendar (Option 1) was chosen by the largest percentages of the full-time faculty (34 percent), the part-time faculty (34 percent), and the night students (31 percent) as best meeting their academic, work and personal needs. The early semester Option 4 was selected by the largest percentage of the administrators (43 percent), the full-time classified (44 percent), the part-time classified (44 percent), and the day students (29 percent).

It is also important to note the following:

1. When the quarter options are combined and the semester options are combined, there is greater support for some type of quarter calendar on the part of the full-time faculty, the part-time faculty, the administration, the day students, and the night students.

2. When the quarter options are combined and the semester options are combined, the classified staff, both full- and part-time, expressed greater support for some type of semester option.

3. The majority of all constituency groups expressed support for calendar options which are different than the current College calendar.

SECTION II

SURVEY COMMENTS

CALENDAR TASK FORCE SURVEY

CALENDAR TASK FORCE SURVEY--COMMENTS

All survey forms included a section where respondents could include open-ended comments. Not all respondents utilized this space, but many did.

FULL-TIME FACULTY

Of the 209 full-time faculty respondents, 82 (39 percent) did write comments on the survey. In a substantive review of these comments the following patterns were evident:

1. Instructional impact of calendars (N=19) Not surprisingly, there was much concern expressed by faculty on the perceived impact of the various calendars on instructional issues. These comments were divided between support for quarter and semester options, with twice as many comments supportive of quarters as compared to semesters. Those supporting the positive nature of quarters felt that quarters were most appropriate to the students we have at the College (N=8). Four respondents commented favorably on the variety of courses available to students under quarters. One respondent commented on the benefits of concentrating on only three courses at a time. Those who felt semesters were more instructionally valuable noted the longer time span provided for projects (N=2). Some noted that quarters were too short to absorb materials or to do projects (N=4).

2. Calendar effects on summer quarter (N=13) The largest single comment category of any consistency involved the negative aspects of the current calendar and its impact on summer schedule. This included concern over the lack of break between spring and summer quarter (N=9), the extended nature of summer quarter (which conflicts with the start of other schools) (N=3) and the late end of the present school year (N=1).

3. Transfer/compatibility issues (N=8) These respondents commented on the greater ease of transfer under semesters (N=4), the general need for compatibility with other schools (N=2) and the need to match calendar with local school districts to provide compatibility within families (N=2).

4. Other comments of note:
   - Seven respondents commented on the need for quarters of equal length during the school year.
   - Three respondents expressed concern with the holiday break in the middle of Winter Quarter in Quarter (Option 2).
   - Three respondents commented that there's not much reason to change what's been working well.

PART-TIME FACULTY

Of the 180 part-time faculty respondents, 54 (30 percent) provided comments on the survey form. In a substantive review of these comments the following patterns were evident:

1. Instructional impact of calendars (N=19) As with the full-time faculty, instructional issues dominated the comments made on the survey form by part-time faculty. In this group, the comments were evenly divided between the instructional benefits of quarters and those of semesters. Five respondents commented on the benefit of shorter time spans for concentration and maintenance of student focus, four commented on the flexibility and versatility of quarters, and one felt that quarters best met the needs of most College of DuPage students. Nine respondents commented favorably on the longer time frame of the semester for instructional purposes and depth.

2. Transfer/compatibility issues (N=8) Five respondents commented favorably about semesters from the point of view of ease of transfer (N=2) and providing synchronisity with other colleges (N=3). Three respondents were concerned with making the College schedule more compatible with their children's school schedule.

3. Other comments of note:
   - Three respondents commented unfavorably on the impact of the current calendar on summer schedule (lack of break, long extension of quarter).
   - Two respondents commented on the positive nature of scheduling evening courses once a week.

ADMINISTRATORS

Of the forty administrators who responded to the survey, eleven (28 percent) provided comments. Three comments were made about the quarter system best serving the needs and learning styles of the current College students. Two mentioned the benefits of semesters in reducing administrative and staff support work. Two mentioned the synchronisity issue, one with respect to transfer to other colleges and one in reference to a tie in to local school calendars.

FULL-TIME CLASSIFIED

Of the 192 full-time classified respondents, fifty-four (28 percent) provided comments. In a substantive review of these comments the following patterns were evident:

1. Transfer/consistency issues (N=29) Interestingly, this area was the most commonly cited issue by these respondents. Eighteen respondents noted the transfer problems of quarters and the ease of transfer of semester credit. Another eleven comments concerned the general lack of consistency with other colleges and universities.

2. Economic issues (N=13) Thirteen respondents commented on the savings in administrative time/costs with the semester system.
3. Instructional impact of calendars (N=10) All of these comments were favorable to the quarter system with eight respondents expressing the belief that quarters were better for C.O.D. students generally. Some mentioned part-time students particularly. One noted his/her belief that shorter terms are better for learning and another mentioned that students commit more easily to quarters.
4. Calendar effects on summer quarter (N=9) These respondents were critical of the present calendar's effects on aspects of the summer quarter, with four respondents noting the lack of spring/summer break, three indicating the present summer quarter runs too late, and two respondents indicating that the spring quarter runs too late into June.
5. Other comments of note:
   - Two respondents noted that they felt that semesters would make advising students easier to accomplish.

PART-TIME CLASSIFIED

Of the fifty-seven respondents in this group, nineteen (33 percent) provided comments. In a substantive review of these comments the following patterns were evident:

1. Transfer/consistency issues (N=9) As with the full-time classified, this area was most frequently mentioned in comments, with five respondents commenting on the ease of transfer with semesters and three commenting on the advantage of being consistent with the calendars of other colleges. One commented on the need to synchronize with local schools.

2. Other comments of note
   - Three respondents expressed concern over current calendar's effects on summer quarter (lack of break before summer, late end to spring).
   - Three respondents commented favorably on the instructional benefits of semesters (more time, better learning).
   - Two commented negatively on the mid-quarter holiday break in two of the options presented.

DAY STUDENTS

Of the 924 day students returning surveys, 168 or eighteen percent provided comments on their survey. A substantive review of these comments revealed the following patterns:

1. Instructional impact/value of calendars (N=42) Many of these comments concerned the students' perception of the relative instructional value of quarters and semesters. Most of these comments (N=23) were favorable towards quarters, such as positive comments on the flexibility, variety and greater options in quarters (N=11), favorable comments on the intensity and brevity of quarters (N=7), comments about the chance to drop out and then back in is indicated as an advantage in quarters (N=3), and the advantages of quarters for working students (N=2). Others were negative towards semesters (N=7) with semesters perceived as being too long to sustain interest or requiring devotion

to too many classes. However, ten students commented favorably on the length of semesters for learning and in completing projects. Two others commented on the value of not meeting class each day and having breaks between class days with semesters.

2. Transfer/compatibility issues (N=36) Most of these comments were favorable towards semesters as enhancing transferability of courses (N=22). Ten mentioned the general desire for compatibility with other semester schools. Four expressed concerns over the need for compatibility with primary and secondary schools in the area.

3. Calendar effects on summer quarter (N=22) These comments were universally critical of our present College calendar. The substance of these comments included complaints about the late end of spring quarter (as it affects summer plans to work and study) (N=13), complaints over the need for a break between spring and summer quarters (N=8) and one comment on the problems of a late ending summer quarter.

4. Other comments of note:
   - Complaints about the late start of the school year (N=5).
   - The perception that the semester calendar would be cheaper for students with respect to books and tuition (N=3).

EVENING STUDENTS

Of the 451 evening students completing the survey, 142 or thirty-one percent provided comments on the survey. The following patterns emerged in a review of these comments:

1. Transfer/compatibility issues (N=47) The largest single group of comments concerned the belief that transfer would be easier with semesters (N=33), that our calendar should be compatible with other schools (N=13) and one person expressed concern with the compatibility local primary/secondary schools.

2. Instructional impact/value of calendar (N=43) The majority of these comments were favorable to quarters in providing more flexibility, variety and less "burnout" (N=11), in providing a more intense focus on fewer subjects (N=9) and the belief that quarters are better for our students who work full time or who have families (N=7). Six people commented that semesters were too long to be effective or involved too many classes. However, ten respondents felt that the longer semester would enhance learning and provide more time for completion of projects.

3. Calendar impact on summer quarter (N=15) Twelve students commented negatively on the late end to spring quarter, two commented unfavorably on the lack of spring/summer break and one commented on the late end to summer quarter.

4. Other comments of note:
   - Six students were critical of the late start in September.
   - Three recommended avoiding splitting winter quarter/semester with a break in the middle.

APPENDIX

STUDENT SURVEY INSTRUMENT

CALENDAR TASK FORCE SURVEY

COLLEGE OF DUPAGE
ACADEMIC CALENDAR
SURVEY

The president of College of DuPage has appointed a task force to study the advantages and disadvantages of the College's current quarter calendar. In addition, research will be conducted regarding calendars of other colleges. Ultimately a recommendation will be made by the Academic Calendar Task Force to the president as to the best academic calendar for College of DuPage. One of the methods of gathering information to support the recommendation is to survey students as to their preference on this issue.

Please complete this questionnaire and return it to your instructor who will forward it to the Office of Research and Planning.

Typical Quarter:
A course meets 5 hours per week for 11 weeks
A full-time load would likely consist of 3, 5-hour courses

Typical Semester:
A course meets 3 hours per week for 16 weeks
A full-time load would likely consist of 5, 3-hour courses

Which of the following academic calendar examples would best meet your academic, work, and personal needs? Please indicate your choice by checking **ONE** of the six calendar options:

___ **ACADEMIC YEAR OPTION 1**

- Fall Quarter: Mid September to mid December
- Winter Quarter: Early January to late March
- Spring Quarter: Early April to mid June
- Summer session available

(Existing C.O.D. quarter calendar)

___ **ACADEMIC YEAR OPTION 2**

- Fall Quarter: Early September to late November
- Winter Quarter: Early December to early March (contains two-week holiday)
- Spring Quarter: Mid March to late May
- Summer session available

(Quarter calendar option)

___ **ACADEMIC YEAR OPTION 3**

- Fall Quarter: Early September to late November
- Winter Quarter: Early January to late March
- Spring Quarter: Early April to mid June
- Summer session available

(Quarter calendar option)

___ **ACADEMIC YEAR OPTION 4**

- Fall Semester: Late August to mid December
- Spring Semester: Mid January to mid May
- Summer session available

(Semester calendar option)

___ **ACADEMIC YEAR OPTION 5**

- Fall Semester: Mid September to mid January (contains two-week holiday)
- Spring Semester: Early February to early June
- Summer session available

(Semester calendar option)

___ **ACADEMIC YEAR OPTION 6**
Other (please explain)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(OVER)

Declared Intent (check one):

____1. A.A. or A.S. Degree (transfer degree)
____2. Transfer (obtain no degree at C.O.D.)
____3. A.A.S. Degree (occupational degree)
____4. Certificate (occupational certificate)
____5. Upgrade Job Skills
____6. Explore Career Options
____7. Personal Enrichment
____8. No Definite Purpose In Mind

Age: ____Years

Gender: ____1. Male ____ 2. Female

Credit Hours Taking This Term: ____Credits

COMMENTS

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your cooperation. Your contribution to this effort is greatly appreciated and very important to the Academic Calendar Task Force.

3/5/92